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*prepared for
review by
DCT on 23 Aug 68*

BRIEFING NOTES - VIETNAM

1. The pace and scope of enemy attacks throughout Vietnam has continued to rise sharply ever since the flurry of activity around Tay Ninh and in western II Corps over the weekend of 17/18 August broke the preparatory "lull."

a. Activity has continued intermittently in III Corps throughout the week, with harassment by fire throughout the Corps, continued fighting in the vicinity of Tay Ninh, a rocket attack on the Bien Hoa air base and a rocket attack on Saigon.

b. There has been harassment by fire throughout II Corps with ground probes against Phan Thiet and Phan Rang. In the early morning hours of 23 August at least five province capitals in II Corps received rocket and mortar attacks and there were more than 30 ground, rocket and mortar attacks reported throughout the Corps area.

c. In IV Corps, 12 of the 16 provincial capitals have received mortar and/or ground attacks since 21 August, there has also been other harassing and probing activity throughout the Corps area.

d. In I Corps, every province capital, at least 16 allied base areas and several district towns were hit with coordinated mortar, rocket and (in some cases) ground attacks. Enemy sapper units penetrated Danang city and the MACV Special Operations Group compound at Marble Mountain. Danang air base was damaged by fire but is operational. The I Corps picture has eased somewhat in the past few hours but there is still heavy ground contact in the area around Danang.

2. The magnitude of the sharp rise in activity is indicated by the quantum jump in the U.S. average daily KIA rate, which was running between 27 and 23 for the week ending on 27 July through the week ending 17 August and jumped to 40 for the five day period ending on 22 August.

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3. All intelligence evidence, signs and indicators point to a continued rise in the scale and intensity of Communist activity over the next two to three weeks. Because of allied preparedness (of which the Communists are well aware), we are not likely to see a sudden, single countrywide "jump-off." Instead, we will almost certainly see (and are now seeing) attacks and harassment by fire spreading over the country like a measles rash. The new moon phase began in Saigon at 0800 hours on 24 August (2000 hours 23 August Washington time). Since the VC almost invariably prefer to initiate action during hours of darkness, the next few days constitute (from their point of view) an optimum time in which to launch attacks.

4. Saigon has had one rocket attack and a small rise in urban terrorist activity. However, it is almost certainly a prime VC target. At a minimum, the VC will almost certainly attempt to slip small units into Saigon to create alarm and confusion. These units will endeavor to provoke politically disadvantageous allied counteraction involving fresh destruction and the generation of an additional crop of at least temporary refugees.

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